**mecc**

the oregon trail

instructional computing courseware
for the **apple**® II computer

How to use your MECC folder cover inserts
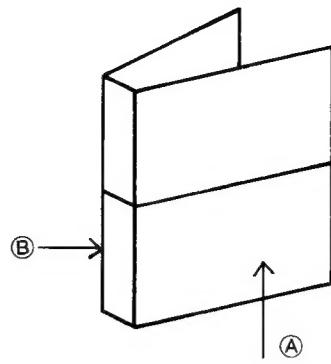
Tear cover on perforated lines. Place half-page title section in the clear vinyl pocket Ⓐ on the front of the binder. Insert finger-sized title in the clear plastic pocket on the spine Ⓑ.

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INTRODUCTION

The simulation of emigrants traveling <u>The Oregon Trail</u> is simple enough for young children to operate and enjoy. At the same time, the simulation is rich enough to support the interest and involvement of older students. It can motivate the fifth grader learning for the first time about people moving across the North American continent by covered wagon; the seventh grader exploring the significance of the Louisiana Purchase; or the tenth grader studying the Westward expansion. It can motivate students of any age to better understand the present by studying the past.

Fiction is used in this simulation to establish time, place, character, and event. However, the primary intent of the simulation is to particularize events and details that will suggest the broader experience of not one, but many overland journeys. The simulation will suggest the impact that over 300,000 people trekking overland by covered wagon to Utah, California, and Oregon had on the development of the western states. To enhance this broader experience, the manual includes perspectives on the simulation and the historical trail; study guides; and a teacher's guide correlated to student activities. A follow-up session for teacher and students ties together the simulation and related activities with discussion questions drawn from the learning objectives listed in the manual. Appendices include a map of the overland trails, a summary of the model, and a list of source materials.

<u>The Oregon Trail</u> diskette requires an Apple II Plus with 64K, and an Apple //e or //c computer. While the program is not color-dependent in operation, use of a color monitor is suggested for a fuller appreciation of the many on-screen color graphics.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE SIMULATION AND THE HISTORICAL TRAIL

The Oregon Trail simulation reflects experiences typically encountered by overland emigrants going West during the pre-Gold Rush years of 1840-1848. Experiences are based on diary accounts, documents, and historical research. Sources are listed in Appendix D. The trail map is shown in Appendix C.

Day-to-day along the trail. Diaries of the period are replete with instances of accidents, illness, births, deaths, and inconveniences such as river crossings, broken wagon parts, disabled animals, lack of water, grass, and firewood. Understandably, comments are frequent and heartfelt on the subject of the weather, the event which could make conditions pleasant or intolerable on the 2400-mile trek from the Missouri River to Oregon. In the simulation too, events and decisions will affect the progress of the journey and the health of the participants. For example, continual rain, more frequent in early summer, will swell the rivers and make them more hazardous to cross. Decisions to over-pace the oxen, neglect rest, and eat poorly will increase the likelihood of accidents and poor health.

Events which had a low incidence, such as unprovoked attacks by Indians,[1] do not appear among the simulated events. Emigrant fear of Indians, however, as well as helpful exchanges between Indians and emigrants, had high incidence.[2] These experiences, which are annotated throughout the literature, are encountered in the simulation through the "talk with people" monologues and during the "trading" and "river crossing" sequences.

Forts and landmarks. While "the earliest overlanders had to rely upon inadequate information, poorly marked trails, only occasional sources of supplies, and few places for repair along the route,"[3] the simulation provides occasional hints for those who read them. Not all notable trail landmarks could be included in the simulation, but seventeen of them are, and they include places that can still be visited, such as Chimney Rock, Independence Rock, and Soda Springs. Forts which existed in 1848, such as Fort Kearney, Fort Laramie, Fort Bridger, Fort Hall, and Fort Boise can be "stopped at for conversation," and for those with money to spend, supplies can be replenished.

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[1]John D. Unruh, Jr. The Plains Across. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1979), p. 9, pp. 156-200.

[2]Lillian Schlissel. Women's Diaries of the Westward Journey. (New York: Schocken Books, 1982), pp. 14, 42, 53, 55, 100, 118-119.

[3]Ibid., p. 5.

River crossings. River crossings on the trail were dreaded. Drownings accounted for more fatal accidents than any other cause.[4] Even if the water was low enough to ford or to float the wagon across by caulking the bottom and fashioning a wagonboat, all provisions had to be unloaded and packed for the crossing and the process reversed upon reaching the opposite shore. Rivers in the simulation can be forded, floated, or ferried across only where ferries were known to have existed in 1848. River depths, which fluctuate with the amount of rainfall, are given for each crossing as well as the opportunity to seek help from an Indian guide or to wait for conditions to improve.

Trading. Bartering on the trail was a means of acquiring a useful commodity or a welcome change of diet, such as fresh vegetables, or after Fort Boise, smoked salmon. According to John D. Unruh Jr., "Very few overland parties crossed the plains without bartering for assorted Indian goods."[5] In fact, it was often the women who sold or bartered ". . . salmon or buffalo for calico or cash."[6] In the simulation, trading can mean the salvation of a journey, providing there is someone to trade with and one has something of substance to exchange.

Hunting. In the simulation, another means of "salvation" is hunting. "Sometimes the wagon trains employed extra hands to hunt buffalo and other game for food; but when no hunter traveled with them, the farmers came back from the hunt empty-handed."[7] Hunting in the simulation imitates reality insofar as it is exciting or frustrating depending on skill; and it is necessary depending on need. In addition, the type and abundance of animals relates to the terrain. Thus, small game, antelope, buffalo, and bear appear more or less frequent, or not at all, depending on whether the terrain is prairie, plains, desert, or mountains.

Graphics and sound. Imagination coupled with the simulation can suggest sounds and smells, the "feel" of the journey, and the human feelings. To aid the imagination, there are twenty-two full color graphics. These interpretations are based on paintings, lithographs, photographs, and descriptions of the locations. Melodies that introduce the landmarks in the simulation were popular by 1848. Songs, such as "Flow Gently Sweet Afton," were sung in along-the-trail performances.

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[4]Unruh, p. 410.

[5]Unruh, p. 164.

[6]Schlissel, p. 53.

[7]Schlissel, p. 53.

DESCRIPTION

After deciding who they will impersonate—a banker from Boston, a carpenter from Illinois, or a farmer from Indiana—students choose which month to leave Independence, Missouri and purchase their "outfit" at Matt's General Store. Preparations complete, students make their way along the overland trail with constant choices to make and sights to see simulated in full color graphics. Will they stop to rest enough, adjust their pace and food rations wisely, or refurbish their supplies at a fort?

There are prairies, rivers, and mountains to cross. There is varying terrain and bad weather to contend with. There is also the possibility of good health or sickness, disease, injury, and death. Along with the pitfalls, there is adventure. Hunting wild animals (a necessity if food supplies fall short) is never easy and sometimes difficult, depending on the terrain. Who the travelers chance to meet and talk with along the trail may increase their knowledge of the trail or their stock of supplies. If all goes well, a rafting trip down the Columbia River or a land trip taking the Barlow Road will culminate at Oregon City with a chance to enter the party's name on the list of The Oregon Top Ten.

Curriculum Area:	Social Studies, Language Arts
Subject:	History
Topic:	The Overland Trail to Oregon in 1848
Type:	Simulation
Grade Range:	5 and Up
Classroom Use:	Individual, Small Group

LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR SOCIAL STUDIES:*

After using this courseware, the student should be able to develop decision-making skills by learning to:

- consider alternative solutions;

- consider the consequences of each solution;

- make and justify decisions;

- act, based on those decisions.

*Some Essential Learner Outcomes in Social Studies. Social Studies for the 1980s and 90s (Revised Edition) Division of Instruction, Minnesota Department of Education, Spring, 1983. Code VIII-A-E-C-16.

Develop intellectual skills by learning to:

- compare things, ideas, events, and situations on the basis of similarities and differences;

- classify ideas or group them into categories;

- ask appropriate and searching questions;

- draw conclusions or inferences from evidence;

- arrive at general ideas;

- make sensible predictions from generalizations.

Develop interpersonal skills by learning to:

- see things from the point of view of others by studying a community of people from the past;

- use group generalizations without stereotyping and arbitrarily classifying individuals;

- recognize value in individuals different from one's self and groups different from one's own by studying a community of people from the past.

Develop participation skills by learning to:

- work effectively in groups—organizing, planning, making decisions, taking action;

- persuade, compromise, bargain;

- practice patience and perseverance in working for one's goal;

- develop experience in cross-cultural situations by studying a community from the past.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR LANGUAGE ARTS:*

After using this courseware, the student should be able to develop his or her comprehension ability by practicing various strategies through learning to:

- recognize details, main ideas, sequence, comparisons (as between characters or events), and relationships (as between main ideas and supporting details);

- infer details, main ideas, sequences, comparisons, relationships;

- distinguish reality from fantasy;

- distinguish between fact and opinion;

- predict outcomes;

- identify organizational patterns such as cause/effect, problem/solution, comparison/contrast, and opinion/example;

- critically interpret reading material.

Reflect, ask questions, and respond to what he or she reads by learning to actively experience and become engaged in what is being read or viewed:

- ask and answer a variety of questions;

- draw the setting or one of the characters;

- identify sequences in a series of pictures;

- compare what is experienced with a written work or film version of the same subject matter.

Connect what is read or viewed to his or her own life by learning to use it:

- as a source for new ideas, new understandings;

- to enlarge his or her world view;

- to speculate about the ideas, emotions, and issues of human life throughout recorded time by studying a community of people from the past.

*Some Essential Learner Outcomes in Communications/Language Arts, Curriculum Bulletin 61, Division of Instruction, Minnesota Department of Education.

PROGRAM PREVIEW

First-time players jump right into the adventure if they choose Option 1, "Travel the trail," on the main menu screen. They may or may not discover some of the information contained in the other options summarized below.

Option 2 gives a brief overview of what lies ahead on the trail. Option 3 displays the names of those travelers whose journeys earned enough points to qualify them for The Oregon Top Ten and also explains how points are earned. Option 4 will turn the sound switch on or off for the melodies heard along the trail. Once on the trail, sound can be switched on or off by holding down the Control Key while pressing **S**.

"Travel" on the trail does not begin until preparations are complete. Decisions significant to the progress of the journey are made prior to leaving Independence, Missouri. The first decision (Figure 1) is whether to travel as a banker from Boston with $1600 to buy oxen and provisions for the wagon; to travel as a carpenter from Ohio with $800; or to travel as a farmer from Illinois with $400. The differences are described in Figure 2.
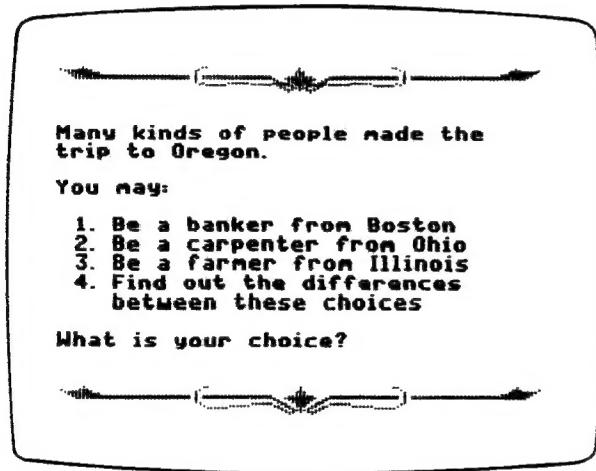

Figure 1
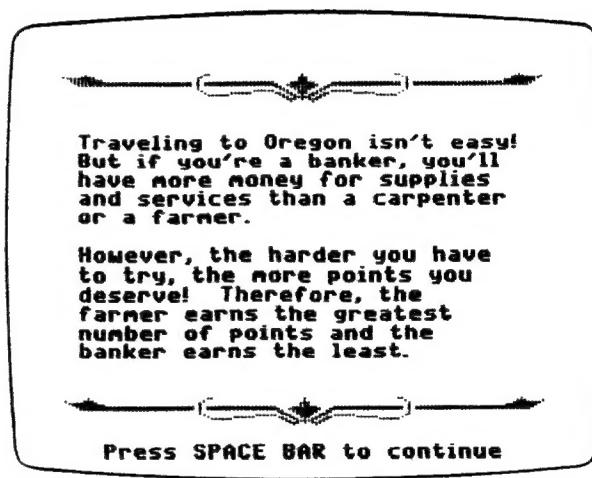
Figure 2

The program asks the name of the wagon leader and later asks the names of four family members or traveling companions. If members are not named and the Return Key is pressed, the program will provide four names. Which month of the year should the wagon party leave Independence? If advice is needed, players can "attend a public meeting for folks with the California-Oregon fever" and find out what makes one departure date better than another.

The next decision involves how money will be spent and how much, if any, will be saved to take along. Matt, from the General Store, not only has helpful advice (Figure 3), but stocks everything required for the trip. He even keeps a running tab of how much money is owed and how much is left (Figure 4).
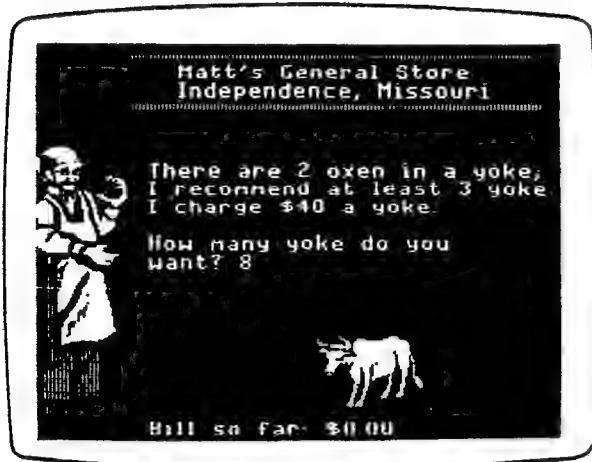
Figure 3

Figure 4

Pressing the Space Bar to leave Matt's General Store means that it's time to load the wagon. This could be the day of departure from Independence, Missouri, but not necessarily (Figure 5). Options available at a fort are shown in Figure 6.


Figure 5

Figure 6

8
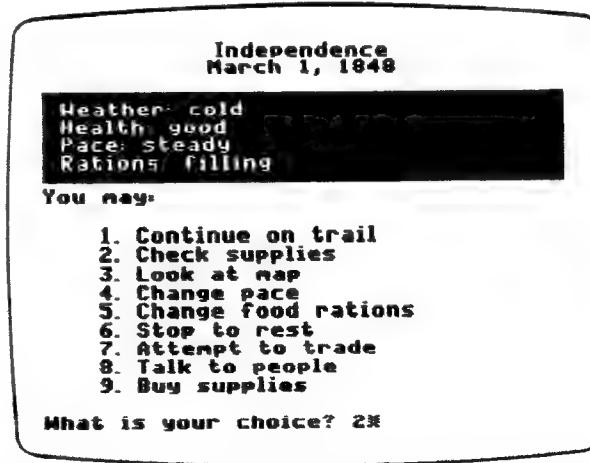
There is still time to check supplies (Figure 7) or look at the map (Figure 8) before starting out on the trail (see Options 2 and 3 on Figure 6).

Figure 7

Figure 8

The party's traveling pace can be changed from steady to either strenuous or grueling (Figure 9). Similarily, food rations can be changed from filling to either meager or bare bones (Figure 10). The program's original settings are those which are least damaging to health.
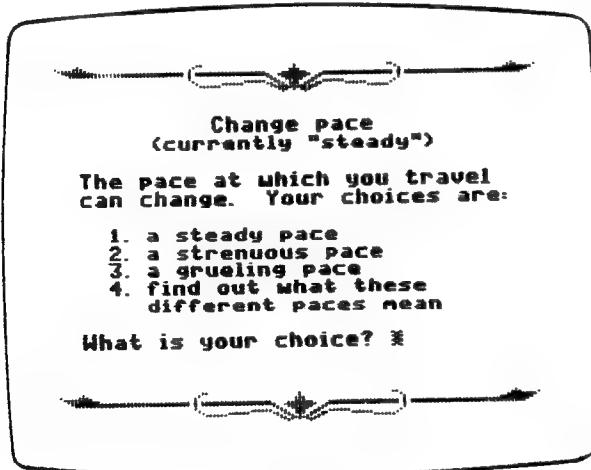

Figure 9
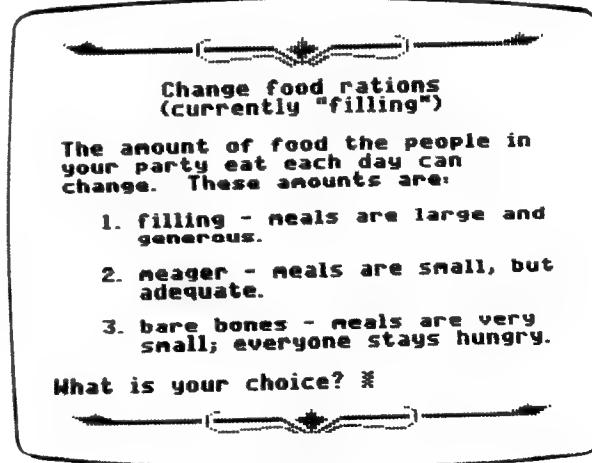
Figure 10

For diversion, or out of necessity, a party can rest from one to nine days (Figure 11) or can try to trade something not needed for something more useful. However, trading, like resting, doesn't come cheap. Each trade costs a day away from the trail.
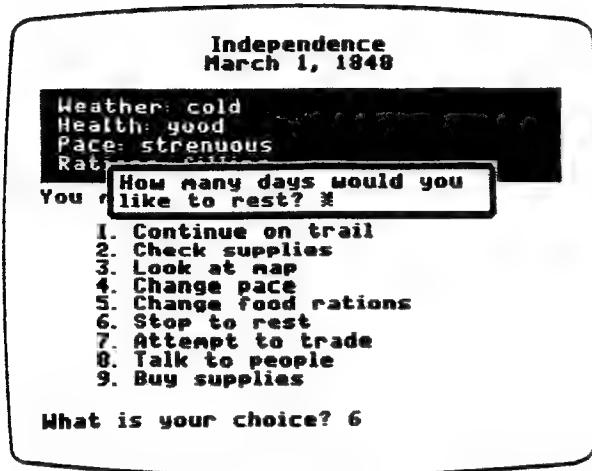

Figure 11
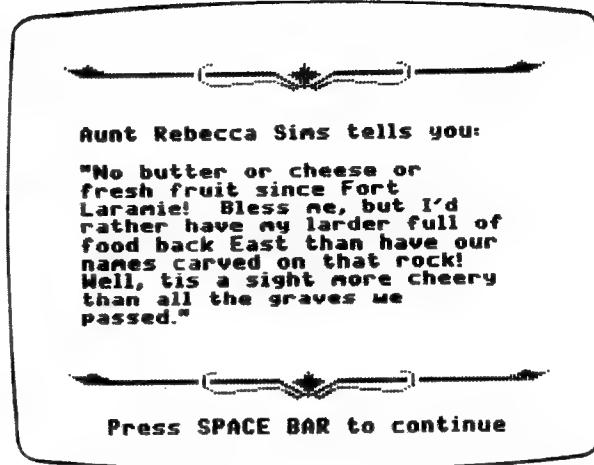
Figure 12

Because Independence is a town, supplies can still be purchased and quantities changed at Independence prices (see Option 9 on Figure 11). Supplies, which get more and more expensive along the trail, can only be purchased at one of the six forts along the way.

There are always people to talk with at any of the landmarks or at the forts. Some people give sound advice, while others tell how they feel about their journey and might even complain a little (Figure 12).

A party will always know when they're on the trail! (Figure 13). The wagon at the top of the screen will move faster or slower depending on the number of oxen pulling it and the pace traveled. Each day crucial facts are reported that may help the party reach its destination. If health begins to deteriorate or the food supply dwindles, pressing Return to "size up the situation" may provide a clue to a remedy.

Figure 13

Instructions for hunting are easy to read, but hunting isn't that easy! (Figure 14). Buffalo and antelope, common on the Great Plains, weigh a lot more than the hundred pounds that can be carried back to the wagon. And, whether it's a two-pound rabbit on the prairie or a 400-pound bear in the mountains, hunting takes a day away from the trail.

There are many places to visit in addition to the seven forts—favorite landmarks such as Chimney Rock (Figure 15), Independence Rock, and Soda Springs can be viewed by answering **yes** to the question, "Would you like to take a closer look?"

Figure 14

Chimney Rock
April 2, 1848
Press SPACE BAR to continue
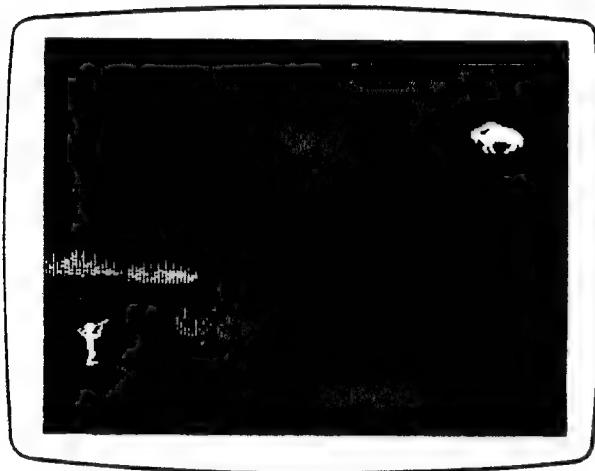
Figure 15

Because rivers along the trail in 1848 were crossed without benefit of bridges, a river's width and depth are given, and if a ferry existed in 1848, an option to hire a ferry appears (Figure 16). Option 5, "Get more information," explains the conditions for crossing. But, even under the best of conditions, accidents can happen (Figure 17).

Green River crossing
May 6, 1848

Weather: warm
River width: 401 feet
River depth: 20.2 feet

You may:
1. attempt to ford the river
2. caulk wagon and float it across
3. take a ferry across
4. wait to see if conditions improve
5. get more information

What is your choice? ▓

Figure 16

Green River crossing
May 7, 1848

Figure 17

11
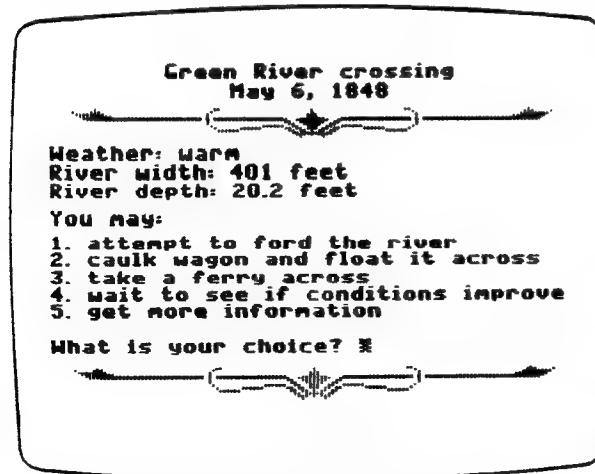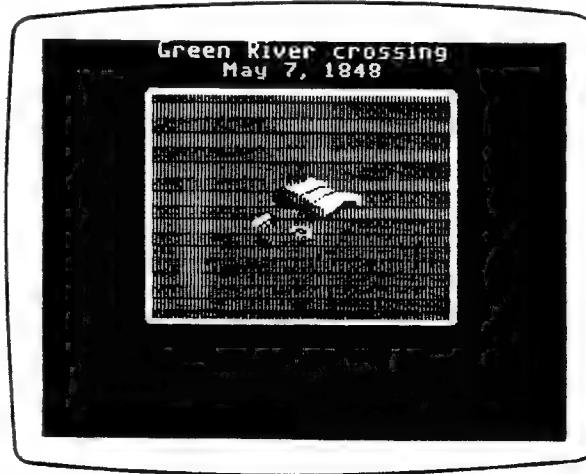
Events happen along the trail that may or may not be influenced by player decisions. Injury, sickness, or death can occur even if careful attention is paid to health, but such events are more likely to occur when health is allowed to decline. If all hazards and difficulties are surmounted and one arrives at the Dalles on the Columbia River, the final choice to make is whether to finish the journey on land by taking the Barlow Road or to take to the rushing waters of the Columbia by raft (Figure 18). If everyone including the party leader should perish along the way, a simple epitaph can be composed for a commemorative tombstone (Figure 19).

Figure 18

Figure 19

If all goes well, a successful journey ends in the Willamette Valley with a summation of how people and belongings fared. This journey may be recorded in The Oregon Top Ten (Figures 20 and 21).
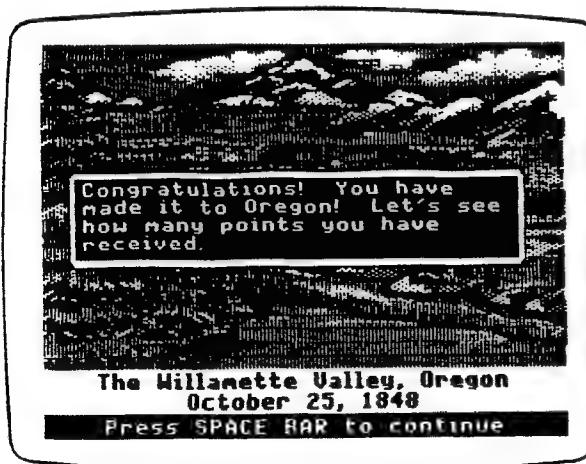

Figure 20
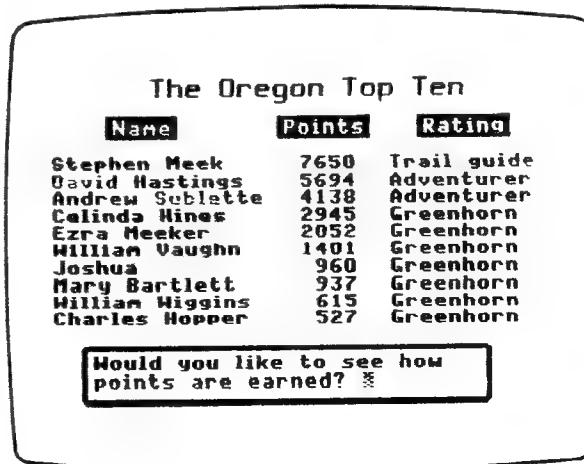
Figure 21

Management options for the program allow viewing of the original and current names listed on The Oregon Top Ten; restoring the original list and clearing the two tombstone messages. They are accessed by holding down the Control Key at the main menu and simultaneously pressing A.

TEACHER'S GUIDE TO ACTIVITIES FOR SOCIAL STUDIES AND LANGUAGE ARTS

Overview

The Oregon Trail may be used to introduce a social studies unit on the Westward expansion or to conclude a unit after acquiring some background. It may be used as a vehicle for researching a topic in language arts or to expand on the theme of "the journey" in creative writing. It may also be used as a stand-alone activity for independent study or enrichment. Certainly, many more connections can be made to the physical and social sciences and to the humanities than can be included in this manual.

In addition, some teaching strategies and assignments, such as the research paper, routinely cross disciplines. Others may have different names but employ similar skills. From a student's point of view, writing a short biography for social studies and a sketch about an historical personage in language arts may seem very similar.

Thus, because of the richness of the subject matter and relationships which cross disciplines, activities and study guides in this manual are not designated for a specific discipline or grade level. A fifth grade class studying about the Oregon Trail and a ninth grade class writing a research paper may both benefit from working with the study guide.

A glance through the descriptions below will indicate to teachers whether an activity is appropriate to their curriculum.

Note: A student handout is included for following the descriptions of Activities 1-8. Activity 9, "Follow-up Session," is drawn from the objectives listed for social studies and language arts and is intended for teacher-student discussion following the use of the computer simulation and associated activities.

Description of Activities 1-8 and Activity 9, Follow-up Session

1. Oregon Trail Journal   (individual or Oregon "team")

This activity (Handout 1) requires students to record data **while they run the computer simulation** and to add a few imaginative details. Many imaginative details could be added depending on whether teachers wish students to "record only" or to "embellish" the simulated trip.

The sample journal shows entries from a simulated trip. Just as each simulated trip varies somewhat or considerably from any other trip, the number of journal sheets needed will vary. Providing a stack of the second page of Handout 1 will save students time at the computer and time in writing, and it will help students track the progress or demise of their journey.

2.   Study Guide A - Planning for the Trip West   (individual or Oregon "team")

Questions in Study Guide A (Handout 3) cover planning for the journey. Most questions have more than one answer as indicated on the Answer Key. Teachers may wish to work with the Study Guide orally using a "What do you think . . .?" format which leads students to answers. Alternatively, material is readily available in libraries, historical societies, and trail museums for interesting reading and research papers. (See Appendix D).

3.   Study Guide B - On the Trail   (individual or Oregon "team")

Questions in Study Guide B (Handout 5) can be answered by paying close attention to the computer simulation and making notes along the way. Some answers will be found only in the "Attempt to trade" and "Talk to people" options of the program; options which may be overlooked by student travelers who are in a hurry.

Students might be reminded that there was not just "one" or even "several" kinds of journeys—that over 300,000 people traveled West on overland trails between 1840 and 1860. Reading emigrant diaries and literature about the period will add interest and variety to the assignment.

4.   Describe an Experience or Event as an Emigrant   (individual)

After students run the simulation, ask them to "stay in character" and describe in detail a particular event or an experience they had along the Oregon Trail. The description can be purely imaginative or involve research to supply accurate details (Handout 7).

Recommended MECC programs:

>   Writing a Narrative (brainstorming and organizing a paper)
>   MECC Writer (word processing)

5.   Write About a Character You Meet on the Oregon Trail   (individual)

As students run the computer simulation, have them pay particular attention to the option "Talk with people." Each monologue is introduced by the "speaker's" name. Some speakers "talk" more than once and exhibit attitudes toward the journey. Students can develop a sketch of a character based on his or her monologue and incorporate parts of it as quotations. Character traits can also be invented for Matt, the storekeeper in Independence, a banker, carpenter, or farmer (wife or child) who may be traveling the trail (Handout 8).

Alternatively, students might read an actual diary and write a sketch of an historical person. The diaries of Francis Parkman and Narcissa Whitman are noted in Appendix D.

TEACHER'S GUIDE (continued)

Recommended MECC programs:

> Writing a Character Sketch (developing an outline)
> MECC Writer (word processing)

6. Answer an Opinion Survey about the Oregon Trail   (small groups)

Students can form opinions and reply to the questions for this activity by running the computer simulation and making speculations (Handout 9). However, informed opinions will require them to read and research. Each question can be answered in a few sentences, but each question could also fill an entire book!

This activity lends itself to building a cooperative database. A class of students can divide into Oregon teams, with each team researching a different question. All information can then be entered into a common database and made available for sharing through discussion or oral and written reports. Varying interests and abilities of students can be accommodated by some students acting as researchers, some keying in the database, and others reporting from the "field."

Recommended MECC program:

> MECC Stuff and Fetch (set up a database)

7. Write a "Changing Times" Paper   (individual)

Much of what occurs in the computer simulation holds "true" for a journey occurring anytime between 1840 to 1860. However, significant physical, social, economic, and political changes altered life on the trail after 1849. Adopting one of the opinions expressed in this activity will lead students to discover just what changes accompanied the Gold Rush. Some conditions improved; for example, there were more ferries and places to replenish supplies. Other conditions, such as relations with Indians, declined. Thus, students can take sides and present two different points of view. The assignment will require them to form an opinion and support it with evidence (Handout 10).

Recommended MECC program:

> Writing an Opinion Paper (brainstorm, assemble evidence, and word process)

8. Role Play For an Oral or Written Report   (individual, pairs)

This activity asks students to try to "walk in the moccasins" of an Indian living in the Great Plains region during the early and late periods of the overland emigration. Students might be given questions to consider when they role play, such as: "What do I see?" "How do I feel?" "What do others in my village say?" "What are my expectations? "What are my fears?"

TEACHER'S GUIDE (continued)

Oral reports might be presented as "scenes" (Handout 11). Students who role play the Indian as a child can be asked to speak one after the other in chant voices or to talk as a group of Indian children who have just witnessed something very unusual. Students role playing the Indian as a young man might role play a group of young men reporting to their elders what they have just seen.

Conclude the activity by making a list on the blackboard of all the changes reported from one time period to the next. Discuss the implications for Indian people, overlanders, and the western states. (If a database is being maintained, as in Activity 6, enter items into the database.)

9.   Follow-Up Session   (class discussion)

Here are some questions teachers and students might consider in evaluating their study of The Oregon Trail. The questions relate the overall experience to the objectives listed for Social Studies and Language Arts.

1.   Has using The Oregon Trail computer simulation and associated activities given me:

   a.   new awareness of decisions and their consequences? For example, if I decide to save money by not buying spare parts, what might happen?

   b.   new skill in forming or grouping ideas based on a large body of information? For example, what are the common elements in the exodus or movement of large groups of people (religious or political persecution; economic deprivation; etc.)?

   c.   new understanding of how a group of people living in another time or place acted under difficult circumstances? For example, have you ever been on a bike, bus, or automobile ride and wondered how long it would take you to reach your destination? Can you imagine a 2,400-mile trip that was at times slower than walking?

   d.   new skill in making group decisions? For example, if you want to take a short cut, such as the Green River instead of Fort Bridger, and your partner does not, how is the decision to continue made?

2.   Has using the Oregon Trail computer simulation and associated activities helped me to:

   a.   look for details and to understand how they add to the importance of the whole? For example, in the overall simulation, Chimney Rock is a detail. What is the significance of this detail in the program? On the trail?

16

b.   interpret a small piece of information and understand its relationship to the whole? For example, someone like "Big Louie" in the simulation might warn you not to push your animals too hard on the trail. Of what relevance is this piece of advice?

c.   imagine myself back in another time and place experiencing life in a different way? For example, if you lived in the 1800's instead of the 1900's, how might your life be different?

d.   think of people today in other parts of the world who experience life differently than you do. For example, are there groups of people in the 1980's who leave their homes with little hope of ever returning?

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT USING ONE OR MULTIPLE COMPUTERS

If Your Classroom Has One Computer

You may wish to introduce students to the computer simulation by involving them as a large group in the decisions to be made prior to leaving Independence. Decisions were made concerning the occupation of the wagon party leader, the month to leave, traveling pace, food rations, and "outfitting" for the journey, such as oxen, clothing, food, ammunition, and spare parts.

After initial decisions are made as a large group, ask students individually, in pairs, or in small groups to take turns running the simulation. Request that while they are at forts and landmarks, they always answer **yes** to the option, "Would you like to look around?" The full screen graphic of the location will signal the next student's turn.

Use the map in Appendix C as a reference and write trail locations across the blackboard. When the simulation ends, have students orally recount the entire journey. Prepare them to participate by telling what happened (or didn't happen) along the section of the trail they were responsible for simulating.

If Your Classroom Has One or Multiple Computers

In preparation for using the simulation, have students form teams of five. Each Oregon team chooses a wagon leader and includes the four names of the other team members. If only one computer is available, assign each team a day to play The Oregon Trail. Have each team keep a record (see Handout 1). As preparation or as follow up for work at the computer, have teams do some research. See Study Guides A and B (Handouts 3 and 5). Answers and information for the study guides are brief. Encourage students to read beyond the simulation and the study guides.

If Your Classroom Has a Computer for Each Student

Have students that are working alone on the computer use Handout 1 to keep a record of their travel. Working alone, the simulation will take students at least twenty-five minutes to get from Independence to Oregon City, and more if they "perish" and begin again. While the simulation will engage their attention individually, more can be learned as more is shared. See suggestions below.

Related Activities for All Computer/Student Ratios

The writing assignments included in the manual, Handouts 4-8, are an entry into some aspect of the overland journey in need of exploration. These assignments can be completed in or outside of class, and in conjunction with, or apart from running the simulation. Some writing activities can be complimented by the use of other MECC instructional material or word processing programs, but none of them requires a computer. See "Description of Activities 1-8, and Activity 9, Follow-up Session," page 13.

You may wish to bring students together as a class for discussion and follow up, particularly if students work individually on the simulation. See Activity 9, "Follow-up Session."

STUDENT HANDOUTS

OREGON TRAIL JOURNAL

RECORD OF THE _____ PARTY

To whom it may concern:

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT I, _____, occupation: _____, in the company of _____, _____, _____, and _____, on the 1st day of _____ 18__, leave from Independence, Missouri for the territory of Oregon.

Besides personal articles from our home, such as our heirloom iron bedstead, _____, and _____, we load our covered wagon with the following supplies purchased from Matt's General Store:

Item	Dollars Paid
____ yoke of oxen	$
____ pounds of food (consisting of _____, _____, _____, _____	$
____ boxes of ammunition	$
____ sets of clothing	$
____ wagon wheels	$
____ wagon axles	$
____ wagon tongues	$
Total:	$
Cash Remaining:	$

Our health on the day of departure is _____, our pace _____, and our food rations _____.

OREGON TRAIL JOURNAL
RECORD OF THE _____ **PARTY (cont.)**

Location and Events

Date: _____

Weather: _____

Health: _____

Food: _____

Next Landmark: _____

Miles Traveled: _____

Date: _____

Weather: _____

Health: _____

Food: _____

Next Landmark: _____

Miles Traveled: _____

Date: _____

Weather: _____

Health: _____

Food: _____

Next Landmark: _____

Miles Traveled: _____

Date: _____

Weather: _____

Health: _____

Food: _____

Next Landmark: _____

Miles Traveled: _____

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OREGON TRAIL JOURNAL
RECORD OF THE _____ PARTY (cont.)

Location and Events

Date: _____

Weather: _____

Health: _____

Food: _____

Next Landmark: _____

Miles Traveled: _____

Date: _____

Weather: _____

Health: _____

Food: _____

Next Landmark: _____

Miles Traveled: _____

Journey's End

After ____ months on the trail, our journey ends at _____ on the

____ day of _____ 18__, with these results:

POINTS

---- people in _____ health

---- wagon

---- oxen

---- spare wagon parts

---- sets of clothes

---- pounds of food

$ ____

Total: _____

SAMPLE JOURNAL

OREGON TRAIL JOURNAL
RECORD OF THE *Grimes* PARTY

To whom it may concern:

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT I, *Joshua*, occupation: *banker*, in the company of *Mary*, *Jed*, *John*, and *Sara*, on the 1st day of *March* 18*48* leave from Independence, Missouri for the territory of Oregon.

Besides personal articles from our home such as our heirloom iron bedstead, *Mary's hope chest*, *Sara's cat*, and *my tools* we load our covered wagon with the following supplies purchased from Matt's General Store:

Item	Dollars Paid
4 yoke of oxen	$ *160.00*
1000 pounds of food (consisting of *flour*, *sugar*, *bacon*, *coffee*)	$ *200.00*
12 boxes of ammunition	$ *24.00*
10 sets of clothing	$ *100.00*
2 wagon wheel	$ *20.00*
2 wagon axle	$ *20.00*
2 wagon tongue	$ *20.00*
Total:	$ *544.00*
Cash Remaining:	$*1,056.00*

Our health on of the day of departure is *good*, our pace *steady*, and our food rations "*filling*."

OF THE *Grimes* PARTY 11.

Location and Events

Joshua Grimes

Journey's End

After *7½* months on the trail, our journey ends at *Willamette* on the *14* day of *Oct* 18*48* with these results:

	POINTS
4 people in *fair* health	*1600*
1 wagon	*50*
5 oxen	*20*
4 spare wagon parts	*8*
6 sets of clothes	*12*
18 pounds of food	*1*
$ *408.50*	*81*
Total:	*1774*

Study Guide A

Planning for the Trip West

_____ ! I hear you and your family plan to leave Ohio and move to Oregon!
(name)

1. Why are you going? Give me three or four reasons:

2. What will you travel in?   Tell me what it looks like:

3. Will you travel alone?   Why?

4. What animals are going with you?

5. What food will you take?

6. What will you take besides food?

7. When is the best time to leave?

8. What is a "jumping off" place?

9. About how many miles is it from Independence to Oregon?

10. What long river will you follow?

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Study Guide A

Planning for the Trip West

Answer Key

Most of the questions on the study guide are not single-answer questions. Below are some acceptable answers and information to help round out the questions.

1. Times were hard in the East; adventure; free land out West; to follow friends and relatives who made the journey.

2. A covered wagon. Typically, emigrants used a farm wagon with a flat bed about ten feet wide with sides two feet high, built of seasoned hardwood and covered with canvas. (**Note**: Schlissel says, "The classic prairie schooner was not the big-wheeled, boat-curved Conestoga wagon" built by the Pennsylvania Dutch in the early 18th century (Schlissel, p. 22).

3. Families traveled with groups of wagons, small groups in the early years. The wagon trains grew longer and longer after the 1849 Gold Rush.

4. Oxen (at least four to six yoke) were used to pull the wagons because they were cheaper to care for than horses, could feed better on the plains; could clear the land better in Oregon, and were harder to steal. Horses were often brought along for scouting the trail or for trading.

5. Staples included flour, bacon, coffee, sugar, salt. Other supplies were brought by the inclination of individual wagon parties.

6. Spare parts: wagon tongues, spokes, axles, wheels, grease buckets, water barrels, and heavy rope. Kitchenware: kettle, fry pan, coffee pot, tin plates, cups, knives, and forks. Clothing, bedding, and other household items varied greatly. Iron bedsteads, cupboards, and even pianos were found abandoned along the trail.

7. Early spring. Feed was sometimes carried for the first weeks and the stock was expected to feed on grass for the remainder of the journey.

8. "Jumping off" places were little towns along the Missouri River, such as Independence and later St. Joseph. Council Bluffs was the usual starting place for the Mormon emigrants.

9. Twenty-four hundred miles from the Missouri River to the rich farm land of the Willamette Valley. "Cutoffs" could shorten (or lengthen) the distance.

10. The Platte. The Platte joins the Missouri River and continues for a thousand miles, wide and muddy. The Platte "formed a two-lane highway with travelers along both of its shores" (Schlissel, p. 24). See Mattes for a full discussion of the importance of the Platte to the Westward expansion.

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=== **Study Guide B** ===

On the Trail

_____ You're a newcomer in Oregon. You've rested
(name)   after your long hard journey and before you
get too busy you want to send your friends back in Ohio some information
about the trail, hoping they'll follow you next year.

1.   Which rivers did you cross?

2.   Which rivers had ferry crossings?

3.   What is a wagon boat?

4.   What forts did you find along the trail in 1848?

5.   Did supplies cost about the same from fort to fort?

6.   What animals did you see before you reached the mountains?

7.   What mountains did you see?

8.   What large group of people traveled along the north bank of the Platte?
      Where was their destination?

9.   At what point did people who were headed for California leave the
      Oregon Trail?

10.   If you needed help crossing a river, whom could you hire?

Study Guide B

On the Trail

Answer Key

Most of the questions on the study guide are not single-answer questions. Below are some acceptable answers and information to help round out the questions.

1.   The rivers to be crossed in the computer simulation are Kansas, Big Blue, the Green (unless one went to Fort Bridger), and the Snake. Some routes crossed and re-crossed the Platte after leaving the Missouri. Other rivers such as the Sweetwater and the Bear are not crossed. The Snake was crossed twice and the Columbia was traveled by raft, barge, or canoe.

2.   The Kansas and the Green rivers.

3.   The wagon bed was turned over and caulked with pitch to make it water-tight. Then one's possessions were packed on top and it was poled through the water, pulled across with ropes or floated to the other side.

4.   Forts in the computer simulation are those which existed in 1848: Forts Independence, Kearney, Laramie, Bridger, Hall, and Boise.

5.   Prices tended to increase as one moved farther West.

6.   Small game animals—rabbits, raccoons, squirrels, and larger animals on the plains, such as antelope and buffalo. Although not in the simulation, prairie dogs, wolves, and foxes are other animals that could be sighted. Bear, elk, and big horn sheep were spotted in the mountains.

7.   The South Pass crosses the Rocky Mountains at the Wind River Range. Out of Fort Boise, the Blue Mountains had to be crossed. The Barlow Road went through the Cascades.

8.   The Mormons. The Mormon Trail to Salt Lake, sometimes called the Nebraska Road, and the California Road followed the north bank of the Platte River.

9.   At Fort Hall the road divided turning west and north to Oregon and southwest to California.

10.   Indians were often hired as guides to pilot emigrant families across the rivers or down the Columbia. Mountain men like Jim Bridger sometimes guided parties across.

DESCRIBE AN EXPERIENCE OR EVENT AS AN EMIGRANT

Directions: As you use the computer simulation, think of how the trip to Oregon would be for a man, woman, or child.   Do some brainstorming with classmates and read some stories or diary accounts.   Then write a description of your experience or an event that gives details from the point of view of a man, woman, or child traveling the trail.

WRITE ABOUT A CHARACTER YOU MEET ON THE OREGON TRAIL

Directions: Choose the "Talk to people" option as you travel along the trail to Oregon and select one of the people to create a character sketch. The speeches are short, but even a short speech or monologue can be full of hints about the speaker. What a speaker chooses to talk about may be a clue to what that speaker considers important. Does a speaker mention the scenery or concentrate on the hardships? Draw what conclusions you can about a character from the monologues and use your imagination to write the sketch.

You may wish to write about a real person from accounts or diaries. Francis Parkman wrote about his adventures in a book called The Oregon Trail. Narcissa Whitman, the first white woman to cross the continent, left a detailed account of her travels and work as the missionary wife of the Reverend Marcus Whitman. If you choose to do a sketch of an historical person, you can use his or her own words to show character.
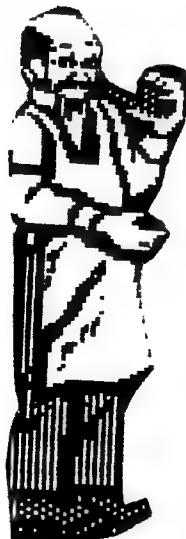
ANSWER AN OPINION SURVEY ABOUT THE OREGON TRAIL

Directions: Much can be learned about the Westward Movement of the 1840's by running the computer program, but there is much more to be learned. Read the following questions and try to answer them as best you can. Then do some additional research and see whether the evidence supports or changes your answers.

1. List reasons why people would leave their homes and travel by covered wagon over 2000 miles to a strange land.

    Why would you?

2. What items were used as trade goods along the trail?

    Who was there to trade with? Do you think trading occurred frequently? _____ Seldom? _____

    Under what conditions did trading occur or not occur?

3. How much hunting do you think people who traveled the trail did?

    Why would they hunt? Where?

    Would they choose not to hunt? Why? Did people know how to hunt?

4. Do you think women played a small or large part in the Westward Movement? Why?

    What were the women's duties? Were they different from those of the men?

WRITE A "CHANGING TIMES" PAPER

Directions: Some historians who write about the Westward Movement along the Oregon Trail write of an early period from 1840 to 1849 and a later period from 1850 to 1860. Do some research to learn how the early and later periods differed.   Then, based on your research, write a paper which supports an opinion of your own or one of the following:

Opinion 1:   State your opinion.

Opinion 2:   "I traveled to Oregon in 1848.   Experience tells me that things are going to get worse on the trail rather than better."

Opinion 3:   "I traveled to Oregon in 1848.   Experience tells me that things are going to get better and better in the next few years for those who travel the trail."

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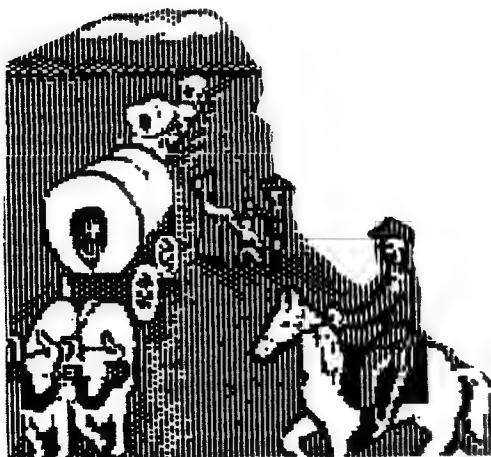
ROLE PLAY FOR AN ORAL OR WRITTEN REPORT

Directions: The following scene will call upon your imagination and require that you do some research before you can compare and contrast the boy's and the man's experience. (**Note:** To compare is to tell how two things are alike; to contrast is to tell how two things are different.)

The Scene:

     . . . You are an Indian of the Kansa tribe, a boy of twelve. You carry your bow and arrows and can ride a pony for miles in any direction, seeing large herds of animals graze and roam the open plains. Suddenly, off in the distance something moves. You ride closer and see several large boxes on wheels with odd-looking blankets circling around the top of the boxes. The boxes are pulled by heavy-fleshed animals. People riding inside the boxes have light skins and dress in strange garments. Later, your father tells you that you have seen the white men in covered wagons pulled by oxen.

The Scene:

     . . . You are older now, a young man of twenty. Under your arm is a rifle for which you traded many deer and buffalo skins. How has your life changed since you rode across the plains as a boy of twelve?

APPENDICES

CREDITS

The forerunner of The Oregon Trail simulation was the original OREGON program designed by MECC and released on the MECC Time Share System in 1975. Adaptations for microcomputers were released in 1981 and 1983.

The core design team for this version of The Oregon Trail package included Philip Bouchard, Charolyn Kapplinger, Shirley Keran, and John Krenz. Major work on the model and systems analysis done by Philip Bouchard, major programming by John Krenz, Graphic art by Charolyn Kapplinger, and the research by Shirley Keran.

Significant design and programming contributions were made by Bill Way, Tim Anderson, and Steve Splinter for the wagon animation and river floating games, and by Roger Shimada for the hunting game.

The documentation was written by Shirley Keran; the Map was designed by Charolyn Kapplinger and Jay Miller.

TO THE READER:

MECC has made every effort to ensure the instructional and technical quality of this courseware package. Your comments—as user or reviewer—are valued and will be considered for inclusion in any future version of the product. Please address comments to:

MECC Courseware Development
3490 Lexington Avenue North
St. Paul, MN 55126

SUMMARY OF THE UNDERLYING MODEL IN THE OREGON TRAIL

To provide realism, the underlying model in "The Oregon Trail" is quite complex. The principal parts of the model increase weather, health, party progress (mileage), river crossings, and random events.

Weather

The weather is generated randomly based on actual average monthly temperature and rainfall tables for six current-day locations near the historic trail:

Kansas City, Missouri   Lander, Wyoming
North Platte, Nebraska   Boise, Idaho
Casper, Wyoming   Portland, Oregon

Daily temperature and precipitation affect health, river depth, progress on the trail, the probability of random events, and so forth. Weather is reported as "rainy," "snowy," "very rainy," or "very snowy." Otherwise, the weather report is based on the prevailing temperature that day:

very hot: above 90 degrees   cool: 30-50 degrees
hot: 70-90 degrees   cold: 10-30 degrees
warm: 50-70 degrees   very cold: below 10 degrees

Snowfall accumulates on the ground, and rainfall accumulates as ground and surface water. Each day, some of the accumulated rainfall or snowfall evaporates. On warm days, part of the snow melts and becomes water. The color of the terrain (green, orange, or white) indicates whether the surrounding landscape currently is in a condition of moisture, drought, or snow cover. (**Note:** The color of the terrain is only updated at certain points, not every day.)

Health

Health has two separate variables: general health of the party and specific injuries or diseases of individuals. These variables are updated each day. General health is a numeric value from 0 to 140, where 0 is ideal health and 140 is the threshold of death:

0-34:   good health   105-139:   very poor health
35-69: fair health   140 or more: remaining party members
70-104: poor health   all die within a few days

Each day, the general health value (or illness value) is decremented by 10%, representing the natural recovery process. Today's factors are then added based on the following conditions:

weather (temperature, precipitation)   pace (or resting)
clothing (during winter)   individual illnesses or injuries
food rations (or lack of food)   random events (especially drought)

On any day, the odds of any party member contracting a disease or getting injured ranges from 0% to 40%, depending upon the general health of the party. If the program determines that someone gets sick or injured, then the person and the disease or injury are chosen randomly. If the person is already sick or injured, then that person dies. Ten days are required to recover from illness and thirty days from injury.

Party progress

Speed of travel is dependent upon several factors in addition to the pace selected. A party in good health, traveling on the plains with at least four healthy oxen at a steady pace, will cover twenty miles per day. Factors that alter this "base" speed are:

changing pace to strenuous:	x 1.5
changing pace to grueling:	x 2
traveling in the mountains:	x 0.5
less than four healthy oxen:	x (number of healthy oxen)/4
sick or injured ox:	counts as 1/2 healthy ox
each sick party member:	10% decrease in speed
snow on the ground:	up to 100% loss of speed, depending on snow depth

Several random events (impassable trail, lost trail, wrong trail) can completely halt progress on the trail for several days at a time.

River crossings

Four river crossings are modeled in the program: the Kansas, Big Blue, Green, and the Snake. Depth, width, and swiftness are based on minimum values for that particular river, plus a value based on the amount of recent rainfall. River levels start at very high levels in March and April and tend to fall off during the summer. Besides fording or floating the wagon across, two crossings (Kansas and Green) offer a choice to take a ferry. The Snake has a choice to hire an Indian guide.

Ferrying – Lowest risk, but costs $5 and must wait up to 6 days. Risk of accident varies from 0% to 10%, based on river swiftness. No ferry when river drops below 2.5 feet.

Floating – Risk varies from low to very high, based on depth and swiftness. Requires spending a full day. River must be at least 1.5 feet deep.

Fording – Low risk when river is below 3 feet; wagon swamps past 3 feet. If swamped, amount of losses is related to depth of river. Between 2.5 and 3 feet, goods get wet; day wasted drying out. Chance of getting stuck when muddy or overturning when rocky.

Hiring an Indian guide – Reduces risk of accident by 80%; in case of accident, reduces amount of losses as well.

Random events

A list of random events is built into the program. The probability of these events occurring is not fixed but depends upon the current circumstances. These events include:

Getting snowbound	Losing the trail	Indians help find food
Severe thunderstorm	Wrong trail	Finding wild fruit
Severe blizzard	Rough trail	Passing a gravesite
Heavy fog	Impassable trail	Fire in wagon
Hail storm	Lost party member	Finding abandoned wagon
Bad water	Ox wandering off	Thief coming during the night
Very little water	Injured party member	Illness (cholera, typhoid,
Inadequate grass	Injured or dead ox	exhaustion, fever)

The Oregon Trail

California-Oregon Trails 1848

Independence

St. Joseph

Council Bluffs

Mormon Trail

Big Blue River

Platte River

Kansas River

Fort Kearney

Chimney Rock

Missouri River

Fort Laramie

Independence Rock

South Pass

Soda Springs

Fort Bridger

Green River

Fort Hall

Great Salt Lake

California Trail

Fort Boise

Oregon Trail

Snake River

Fort Walla Walla

Blue Mountains

Columbia River

The Dalles

Barlow Road

Oregon City

Willamette River

Sacramento

Miles

0   100   200   300

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Unruh, John D. Jr. *The Plains Across.* Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1979.

OTHER SOURCES

MAP

"The Oregon Trail--The Highway of the Pioneers to the Pacific Northwest." Full color wall map. (Available from Binford and Mort, 1202 N.W. 17th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97209, (503) 221-0866, $3.95).

MUSIC

"Touch the Past." Record or Cassette Tape. Twenty-two traditional melodies popular on the trails with a 16-page booklet containing words, music, and a pioneer diary. (Available from The Saint Joseph Museum, 11th and Charles Street, St. Joseph, Missouri 64501, $8.50 plus $1.50 for postage and handling.)

MAGAZINES

"The Overland Journal." (A quarterly publication of the Oregon-California Trails Association, Box 42, Gerald, Missouri 63037.)

"Cobblestone." The history magazine for young people. (December 1981 issue "The Oregon Trail," Patrice Press, Box 42, Gerald, Missouri 63037.)

The Minnesota Educational Computing Corporation is an organization established in 1973 to assist Minnesota schools in implementing educational computing. MECC provides a variety of services to education, including 1) development and distribution of instructional computing courseware; 2) in-service training for educators and development of materials for conducting training; 3) educational computing assistance through newsletters and computer purchase contracts; and 4) management information services, including the development and maintenance of statewide payroll/personnel and financial accounting software and administrative computer packages. MECC's knowledge and expertise in the educational computing field comes from more than a decade of working with and providing leadership for thousands of local educators on a daily basis.

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  If you have any problems using MECC software:
  1) make note of the name and version number of the product;
  2) note the brand and model of the equipment involved, as well as the type of printer card used if the problem concerns a printer;
  3) write or call the Help Line to describe the problem **(612/481-3660).**

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